



Region 2 Headquarters  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
Phone 406-542-5500

July 9, 2020

Dear Interested Citizen:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has released a draft environmental assessment (DEA) titled *North Fork Blackfoot River Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Project*. The DEA evaluates a proposed project with the primary purpose of establishing a conservation population of westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in the North Fork Blackfoot River (NFBR) watershed upstream of a barrier waterfall (North Fork Falls) in the Scapegoat Wilderness. The NFBR watershed includes portions of Powell and Lewis & Clark counties and the Lolo and Helena-Lewis & Clark (HLC) national forests. Secondly, the project would eliminate or substantially reduce a source of nonnative genes that threaten native WCT in the NFBR watershed downstream of the barrier falls. Both goals would bring considerable conservation benefit to native trout.

Native fish restoration in the NFBR would require removing the existing fishery (comprised of hybrids of rainbow trout, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, and WCT) using CFT Legumine™ or Prenfish™, two formulations of liquid rotenone (a naturally-derived piscicide substance used to kill fish) commonly used in stream reclamations in Montana. This would be followed by stocking of genetically pure WCT in the project area. (This proposed project follows FWP's previous *Pilot-Level Bioassays and Fish Distribution Testing Project* EA process for the NFBR in 2018.)

The Current DEA may also be obtained by: mail from Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula 59804; phoning 406-542-5540; emailing [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov); or viewing the DEA's webpage on FWP's website <http://fwp.mt.gov> (under "News," choose "Recent Public Notices," beginning July 9).

**Comments:** May be made on the DEA's webpage above or directed to Sharon Rose by mail or email to the addresses above or emailed to [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov). Comments must be received by FWP no later than August 7, 2020. (Comments may also be made during the Public Meeting; details below)

**Public Meeting:** FWP will hold a public meeting on July 22 beginning at 6:30 pm, to present the proposal, answer questions, and take public comment. Due to the Governor's orders regarding distancing and gathering of groups during the Covid pandemic, this meeting will be a “virtual meeting,” conducted using a video conferencing platform.

Virtual meeting information. A livestream of the public meeting will be available for the public to watch on FWP’s website, <http://fwp.mt.gov>, on the webpage where the North Fork Blackfoot DEA is posted.

Commenting during the virtual meeting. There will be an opportunity to provide public comments by dialing in by phone during the public comment portion of the meeting:

Dial +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 981 3965 8750

Password: 673265

To “raise your hand” when you are ready to comment, press \*9, and you will be unmuted and able to comment. At that time, please mute the livestream of the meeting on your device to minimize background noise. Please state your name and where you are from before making a comment.

As part of the decision-making process under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), I expect to issue the Decision Notice for this Draft EA and project soon after the end of the public comment period.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Arnold', is positioned above the printed name.

Randy Arnold  
Regional Supervisor

RA/sr